AMENDMENTS TO SPECIFICATION

Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 6, line 27, with the following rewritten paragraph:

The more preferred antigen composition contains purified, synthetic cardiolipin, synthetic lecithin, natural or non-synthetic cholesterol, and an alcohol. The optimal purity of the synthetic cardiolipin and lecithin in the composition is 99% or greater. The optimal purity of the cholesterol is 98% or greater, or is ash free. Most preferably, the antigen composition contains tetramyristoyl cardiolipin, 1-palmitoyl-2-oleoyl-*sn*-glycero-3-phosphocholine, cholesterol, and absolute (100%) ethanol. The preferred concentration by volume of synthetic cardiolipin in the composition is between about 0.01-0.05%, or between approximately 0.02-0.04%, or more preferably 0.03%. The preferred concentration by volume of synthetic lecithin in the composition is between approximately 0.11 - 0.16%, more preferably 0.14%. The preferred concentration by volume of cholesterol in the composition is approximately 0.9%, and the remainder of the composition is the alcohol.

Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 11, line 3, with the following rewritten paragraph:

The preferred concentration of synthetic cardiolipin in the composition is between about 0.01-0.05% by volume, or between approximately 0.02 -0.04% by volume, or more preferably 0.03% by volume. The preferred concentration of synthetic lecithin in the composition is between approximately 0.11 and 0.16% by volume, more preferably 14% by volume. The preferred concentration of natural cholesterol in the composition is approximately 0.9% by volume, and the remainder of the composition is alcohol, preferably ethanol, most preferably absolute (100%) ethanol.

Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 12, line 30, with the following rewritten paragraph:

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The VDRL antigen can be prepared, for example, by preparing an ethanolic solution of tetramyristoyl cardiolipin at a concentration by volume ranging from about 0.01-0.05%, or 0.02 to 0.04%, or more preferably 0.03%. An ethanolic solution of synthetic lecithin having a concentration by volume of approximately ~~0.1 1 to0.16%,~~0.11 to 0.16%, more preferably 0.14%, and an ethanolic solution of natural cholesterol of 0.9% are added to the cardiolipin solution. The components are added in the following sequence: cardiolipin, lecithin, cholesterol, and ethanol to volume. The antigen is solubilized and stored at room temperature overnight before testing.